Animals and Public Policy
ANST-UA 500
Thursday, 5:00-7:30 pm
Professor David J. Wolfson; djw9@nyu.edu

DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide an overview of public policy with respect to the somewhat contradictory treatment of animals by humans, with a focus on how public policy is created and how social change occurs. We will consider what public policy consists of and what actors and factors play a role in its creation; how society views animals; the capacities of animals; how ethics relates to animal treatment; how animals are currently utilized by our society; and political and other efforts to improve or alter the current treatment of animals, including the influence of science, government, business and non-governmental organizations in defining and influencing animal-related policies. We will focus on legislation, litigation, regulation, and ballot initiative and consumer campaigns and their effectiveness, as well as other strategies that relate to improving animal welfare. We will also discuss the meaning of “animal rights” and the success and impact of the modern animal protection movement.

READINGS:

Selection from a number of texts are all provided in the syllabus or through NYU Classes. Please acquire the following book:

An Introduction to the Policy Process (5th Edition), Thomas Birkland (can be found free online on NYU’s library database here).

Students will also be required to have seen Unlocking the Cage by 10/15.
ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:


A) Chapter 1 of An Introduction to the Policy Process, Thomas Birkland.
B) Pg. 50 - 55 of Ethics and Animals, Lori Gruen
C) Animal Advocacy By Numbers, Faunalytics

Suggested Reading:
- It Could Be the Age of the Chicken, Geologically, The New York Times

II. Public Policy: The Basics (9/10)
- Student presentations

A) Chapter 2 (pages 32-53) and 6 (205-212 and 223-241) of An Introduction to the Policy Process.
B) Laws that Protect Animals, Animal Legal Defense Fund

III. What We Think About Animals: Historical/Cultural Reasons For This Perspective (9/17)
- Student presentations

A) Chapter 5 of Animal Liberation, Peter Singer.
B) Pg. 1 - 22 of Ethics and Animals, Lori Gruen
C) Pg. 3 - 19 of Sapiens, Yuval Noah Harari (2011).

IV. What Can Animals Do? Guest Lecturer: Jeff Sebo, NYU (9/24)
- Student presentations

B) TED Talk: What are animals thinking and feeling? Carl Safina
C) Pg. 359 - 372 of Animals and Society, Margo DeMello

V. How Should We Treat Animals? (10/1)
- Student presentations

A) “An Animal's Place,” Michael Pollan
B) Chapter 1 of Animal Liberation, Peter Singer
C) Against Animal Liberation? Peter Singer and His Critics, Gonzalo Villanueva

Suggested Reading:
- Pg. 22 - 33 of Ethics and Animals, Lori Gruen
VI. History of the Animal Protection Movement (10/8) Guest Lecturer: Bernard Unti, HSUS
– Student presentations

B) The Development of the Anti-Cruelty Laws During the 1800’s, David Favre and Vivien Tsang.
C) History of the Animal Rights Movement, Norm Phelps
D) Pg. 402 - 411, Animals and Society, Margo DeMello


A) Chimpanzee Rights with Jeff Sebo, Knowing Animals Podcast
B) Gradually, nervously, courts are granting rights to animals, The Economist
C) Citizen Ape: The Fight for Personhood for Our Closest Relatives, Pacific Standard
D) Chapter 4 (pages 113-125, and bottom part of 127) of An Introduction to the Policy Process.

Suggested Reading:
- Explore Cruelty Free International

Students will have seen Unlocking the Cage by this class.

VIII. Analysis of Certain Animal Protection Campaigns Part 2 (Fashion Animals and Trophy Hunting) (10/22) Guest Lecturer: Joshua Katcher, author of Fashion Animals and Anna Frostic, Senior Attorney, Wildlife & Animal Research at HSUS

A) The Fur Debate, Bridget Foley
B) What Can We Learn From the Fur-Free Fight?, Open Philanthropy Project
C) Could You Live in a Vegan House? Nicola Davison
D) Trophy Hunting, National Geographic
E) Fashion Animals, an interview with Joshua Katcher, Dressed: The History of Fashion Podcast

Suggested:
- How PETA Won Its Messy Fight and Took a Seat at the Table, New York Times

IX. Farmed Animal Welfare Reform In The United States: A Personal Case Study (10/29)
A) Chapter 9 of Animal Rights, Current Debates and New Directions, David J. Wolfson and Mariann Sullivan.
B) Pg. 195 - 202 of Ethics and Animals, Lori Gruen
C) Calves in Confinement, The Intercept
D) **A loud and clear message: California passes historic farm animal protections**, The Guardian
E) **California’s Prop. 12 to have far-reaching impact**, National Hog Farmer

Suggested:
- **Chapter 6** of International Farm Animal, Wildlife and Food Safety Law, Aurora Moses and Paige Tomaselli

**X. Eating Animals: Workers Rights, the Environment and Climate Change (11/5)**
Guest Speaker: lauren Ornelas, Founder and President of Food Empowerment Project

A) **Exploitation and Abuse at the Chicken Plant**, The New Yorker
B) **Intersectionality Animal Studies Packet**
C) **How the Meat Industry Thrives on Environmental Racism**
D) **Pg. 70 - 92** of Food, Animals, and the Environment, Jeff Sebo and Chris Schlottmann

Suggested reading:
- **Reach ‘peak meat’ by 2030 to tackle climate crisis, say scientists**, The Guardian
- **Jonathan Safran Foer: why we must cut out meat and dairy before dinner to save the planet**, The Guardian

**XI. Corporate Campaigns, Mislabelling, Meat Alternatives and Shame (11/12)**
Guest Lecturers: Jennifer Jacquet, NYU and Leah Garcés, President of Mercy For Animals

A) **The Case Against Octopus Farming**, Jennifer Jacquet, et. al.
B) **Seafood stewardship in crisis**, Jennifer Jacquet, Daniel Pauly
C) **Public shaming makes the world a better place**, Wired
D) **Want to help animals? Focus on corporate decisions, not people’s plates**, Vox
E) **Plant-based Meat Alternatives**, Forbes

Suggested reading:
- **Why Is Meat So Cheap?** Open Philanthropy Project

**XII. Undercover Investigations and Ag-Gag (11/19)**
Guest Lecturer: Scott David, Investigations Associate, Animal Outlook

A) **“Ag-Gag” Laws: Evolution, Resurgence, and Public Health Implications**, Caitlin Ceryes and Christopher Heaney
B) **Coalition Files Lawsuit Challenging Iowa’s Second Unconstitutional Ag-Gag Law**, Animal Legal Defense Fund

*THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS 11/26*
XIII. Lobbying at the State Level (Final Presentations) (12/3)
Guest Lecturer: Jennifer Fearing, Fearless Advocacy

A) Nonprofit State Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy in California, Jennifer Fearing
B) California AB 711 (2013) Campaign Materials

XIV. Zoonotic Disease: Animals and Public Policy in the time of COVID (Final Presentations) (12/10)
Guest Lecturers: Aysha Akhtar, M.D., M.P.H.
Sending out the final on 12/10

B) The next pandemic could come from factory farms, Vox
C) Animal source of the coronavirus continues to elude scientists, Nature

METHODS:
In this course we will analyze applied interdisciplinary subject matter through a public policy lens, focusing on how political and social change occurs. All reading material needs to be analyzed critically. Every author has an agenda or bias that should be questioned.

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:
What is public policy? How is it created? Who participates? What factors are important? Why should we care about animals? All animals?
How are animals treated in our society? How should animals be treated?
What are “rights”? Should (all) animals have “rights”?
How are laws created, what do laws do, and what is animal law?
How does social and political change occur? What are the tools to change public policy? How do we balance competing interests? How much should change “cost”?
What is the most effective way to improve the treatment of animals in our society?

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:
This topics course is designed to foster close reading and conceptual analysis of complex, interdisciplinary subjects. The list of “central questions” above is designed to foster this analysis. Active class conversation is required in order to develop and unpack the assumptions, arguments and implications of the topics we discuss. Since the success of the course depends heavily upon class participation, you are expected to attend all sessions and participate actively. Attendance will be taken for each class. Please note that missing more than one class without permission will negatively impact your grade. If you cannot make a class, please email me in advance and get notes from your colleagues. I will not be able to re-teach the material.

Your final grade will be determined by the sum of points accumulated for each component according to Steinhardt School of Education Grading Scale.
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**Participation – 30%**
Your active participation in class discussion and reading responses are required. Students are expected to have read the materials, reviewed notes from the previous class, and be ready and willing to discuss the readings and contribute to class debates. Grading for class participation will focus on comprehension, clarity of presentation, coherence, and starting a productive conversation.

**Reading Responses – 10%**
Starting the second week of classes, students are expected to post a 100 word reading response on the “Forum” tab in NYU Classes by 10am the morning of class. Students should engage with one or more texts analytically by raising questions, making connections to other readings throughout the course, or tying it to their personal experiences and opinions. Responses submitted late will impact your participation grade. You will receive a grade for the whole body of work over the semester.

**Initial Presentations – 10%**
Each student will each be responsible for a five minute presentation in the second through sixth class. Topics will be assigned in the first week. Students will need to address the relationship between the current use and treatment of animals and the ethical implications of such use.

**Midterms – 15%**
Essay questions will be distributed after class on Thursday, 10/22 and will be due on Friday, 10/30 at 6 pm. Students will be asked to choose two essay questions from among three topics addressing and comparing the main themes of the course, constructing analyses that incorporate the reading and class material examined throughout the course of the semester.

**Final Presentations – 20%**
Students will work on collaborative projects, which will be assigned in the first part of the semester. The project needs to be critically analyzed and thoroughly sourced. Collaboration among the group is an essential element of the project. Each group will be asked to present on an issue in the following area: Create a future animal protection campaign on a particular issue, with a focus on the public policy goal of the campaign and the public policy actors and tools to be impacted or utilized, specifics of the campaign, problem-areas, and reasons for why the campaign is worth investing time and money, i.e., the reasons you
think it would be successful, and what you think “success” means. One key aspect of this analysis will be a discussion of what you imported (and chose to not import) from other campaigns and why.

**Deliverables:**
1. A proposal as discussed above,
2. A 20-25-minute presentation to class,
3. A PPT, video, or written report on the historical analysis/proposal, including references (~30 pages long or equivalent)
4. One paragraph on your individual contribution to the collaborative process.
Additional details on these collaborative projects will be provided in the first part of the semester.

**Final – 15%**
Essay questions will be distributed on Thursday, 12/10 and will be due on Friday, 12/18 at 8 pm. Students will be asked to choose two essay questions from among three topics addressing and comparing the main themes of the course, constructing analyses that incorporate the reading and class material examined throughout the course of the semester.

**POLICIES:**
*Laptops/Cell Phones:*
Zoom cameras must be turned on and must use a background. Cell phones must be turned off.

*Academic Integrity:*
Academic integrity means that the work you submit is original. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious — for example, presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written); writing a sentence or paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea(s) without a reference to the source of the idea(s); or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance). Receiving or giving help on a take-home paper, examination, or quiz is also cheating, unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects).

*Extensions/Incompletes:*
In the interest of fairness to other students, extensions and incompletes are only given in exceptional circumstances. Please discuss a request with me well before the due date.

*Disability Disclosure Statement:*
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.